

CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

(And Emission Control Devices)

HAZARDS & RULES

Base Materials - Hazards & Impacts

There are no hazards and/or impacts associated with the base materials found in catalytic converters.

Additives and Contaminants - Hazards & Impacts

There are no additives or contaminants associated with used catalytic converters.

Regulatory Overview

The 1970 Clean Air Act prompted the development of catalytic converters, which reduce harmful vehicle emissions by as much as 90 percent. Catalytic converters cause a chemical reaction in the exhaust gases while they are within the emissions system, changing harmful emissions into relatively benign emissions.

Tampering with emission control devices (such as catalytic converters, exhaust gas recirculation valves, air pumps, etc.) is illegal. This antitampering law applies to individuals as well as to businesses. Individuals may be fined as much as \$2,500 for each vehicle tampered with, and businesses are subject to fines of up to \$25,000. Note that businesses that sell used vehicles must ensure that the vehicle is equipped with all emissions control devices that were originally installed by the manufacturer.

To ensure that shops are in compliance with the antitampering law, you must follow specific procedures when working with catalytic converters, including ensuring that proper replacement parts are used and that all required paper work is completed and kept on file. A detailed listing of these procedures follows.

Management Responsibilities

As the shop manager or owner, you can ensure your shop's compliance with IDEM's regulations by adhering to the following management practices. Also listed are suggested practices that you should follow in order to ease your regulatory requirements and improve the environmental health of your shop.

You Must:

- ! not tamper with catalytic converters or any part of the vehicle's emissions control equipment. Tampering includes activities such as:
 - removing or making the control emissions inoperable.

- adjusting control emissions so that they no longer meet the manufacturer's specification.
 - installing a replacement part that is not specified for use in the vehicle or is not equally effective in reducing emissions as the specified replacement part.
 - adding a part that was not originally certified on the car.
- ! not rent, lease, sell, or transfer a vehicle which has been subject to tampering. For information regarding the required components of a particular vehicle's emission control system, contact IDEM's Office of Air Management (OAM) or CTAP.
- ! not operate a vehicle with knowledge that the vehicle has been subject to tampering.
- ! install an original equipment catalytic converter unless the vehicle is beyond its emissions warranty. In this case, an aftermarket catalytic converter may be installed.
- ! install the same type of converter as the original (i.e., oxidation, three-way, or three-way plus.)
- ! install the proper converter for the vehicle as specified by the converter manufacturer or a converter that is equally effective in reducing emissions.
- ! install the converter in the same location as the original.
- ! complete the registration card accompanying the new unit to be installed (or use the example form printed in the manufacturer's catalog.) Both the installer and the customer must sign the card/form, which is to be given to the owner of the vehicle.
- ! mark the old converter with the number on the card/form, and keep the old converter for a minimum of 15 days (in case EPA or IDEM wishes to inspect the part), and the paperwork for a minimum of 2 years. (Note that EPA only requires you to keep the paperwork for 6 months, but IDEM requires that you keep it for 2 years.)
- ! ensure that the invoice for replacement includes the customer's name, address, and the vehicle's make, year, mileage, and reason for replacement of the catalytic converter.

It is illegal to tamper with emission control devices.

The Antitampering Law applies to individuals as well as to businesses. Individuals may be fined as much as \$2,500 for each vehicle tampered with, and business are subject to fines of up to \$25,000.

You Should:

- ! always refer to the catalytic converter manufacturer's application catalog to ensure that the proper replacement part is installed.

- ! send old catalytic converters to scrap metal recycling companies. Catalytic converters contain precious metals such as platinum, palladium, and rhodium. A list of scrap metal recyclers is available via the Fax-On-Demand system.
- ! if your customer's vehicle does not have a catalytic converter or has an altered converter, you should:
 - inform your customer that the vehicle was either illegally sold to him/her or that your customer has violated the antitampering law by altering the converter.
 - ➔ If a customer has altered the converter or any part of the emissions control system, you should encourage him/her to correct the problem. You should also inform your customer that he/she is subject to a fine of \$2,500.
 - ➔ If a customer has purchased a vehicle without a catalytic converter, he/she should call OAM at 317/232-8419 or 800/451-6027, ext. 2-8419. OAM will then investigate citizen complaints regarding vehicle tampering.

**If you suspect violations of the Antitampering Law, contact
IDEM's Office of Air Management
at
317/232-8419 or 800/451-6027, ext. 2-8419**
